

Raised Bill No. 226
“AN ACT CONCERNING SINGLE-USE CARRYOUT BAGS”

Written Testimony

Submitted to Connecticut State Legislature

(submitted Via Mail: envtestimony@cga.ct.gov)

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Dear Connecticut State Legislature:

I write in support of the proposed to require a phased-in transition to one hundred per cent recyclable single-use carryout bags that contain not less than eighty per cent post-consumer recycled materials and to require the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection to enter into a memorandum of understanding with the grocery and retail industries that provides for a fifty per cent reduction in the distribution of paper bags and plastic single-use carryout bags by 2021. in the State of Connecticut (CT). Un-recycled single-use carryout bags, and indeed plastic bags in general, represent and unnecessary environmental hazard. Requiring that single-use carryout plastic and paper bags be recyclable and made largely from recycled materials

will yield significant benefits for CT. So too will reducing the use of single-use carryout bags. It will also align CT with an increasing large number of places that have taken action to eliminate or restrict plastic bags. I will focus my brief written testimony to plastic bags

I am sure your Committee will receive sufficient information on the negative impacts of plastic bags, especially those that are not recyclable or made from recycled materials. These include, inter alia:

- the amount of oil and natural gas that goes into their production;
- the amount of unsightly litter that gets caught and remains in trees, bushes, beach grass, etc;
- the difficulty of removing this litter;
- the negative impacts on marine life, especially when bags rip into smaller pieces or small particles that are then ingested into the food web;
- production of toxic substances such as dioxins when the bags are incinerated;
- very low recycling rates;
- significant difficulties associated with attempting to recycle some types of these bags;
- the negative impacts the bags have on some recycling machinery;
- and many other issues.

Eliminating non-recyclable, single use plastic bags and increasing the use of reusable bags will also save consumers money. Eliminating non-recyclable plastic bags should also enhance and reduce costs associated with recycling paper, metal and other plastics, efforts which can save money for towns (taxpayers) and businesses.

Thus, rather than provide additional details on the above points. The remainder of this brief, written testimony will list some of the places that have banned or significantly restricted the use of plastic bags. While these measures go beyond what is proposed in this bill, the significant and diverse number of locations that have banned single-use plastic bags buttresses arguments that less stringent efforts like those proposed in this bill are completely mainstream and follow on successful policies enacted elsewhere.

Places that have banned or placed severe restrictions on single use or other types of plastic bags (indicative lists; the full lists are longer)

Countries: Rwanda became the first country to ban plastic bags. It became effective in 2008.

US Statewide Bans: California - legislation passed September, 2014. Takes effect in July 2015.

US City and County Bans:

- Alaska: Bethel and Hooper Bay
- Arizona: Bisbee

- California: More than 130 cities, towns and counties have banned ultrathin plastic bags, including: Alameda County; Arcata; Belmont; Brisbane; Burlingame; Calabasas; Calistoga; Campbell City; Capitola; Carmel-by-the-Sea; Carpinteria; Colma; Chico; Culver City; Cupertino; Daly City; Dana Point; Davis; Desert Hot Springs; East Palo Alto; El Cerrito; Encinitas; Fairfax; Foster City; Glendale; Gonzales; Greenfield; Half Moon Bay; Huntington Beach; Hercules; Indio; Laguna Beach; Long Beach; Los Altos; Los Gatos; Los Angeles; Los Angeles County; Malibu; Manhattan Beach; Marin County; Marina; Martinez; Mendocino County; Menlo Park; Mill Valley; Millbrae; Monrovia; Monterey; Monterey County; Mountain View; Napa; Novato; Ojai; Pacific Grove; Pacifica; Palm Desert; Palo Alto; Pasadena; Portola Valley; Pittsburg; Redwood City; Richmond; Salinas; San Anselmo; Sand Bruno; San Carlos; San Francisco (became the first city in the nation to adopt a ban on plastic shopping bags in April 2007); San Jose; San Mateo City; San Mateo County; San Pablo; San Rafael; Santa Barbara; Santa Cruz City/County; Santa Monica; Santa Rosa; Sausalito; Seaside; Solana Beach; South Lake Tahoe; South San Francisco; South Pasadena; St Helena; Sunnyvale; Truckee; Ukiah; Walnut Creek; Watsonville; West Hollywood
- Colorado: Aspen; Basalt; Carbondale; Telluride
- Connecticut: Westport
- Hawaii: Hawaii County; Honolulu County; Kauai County; Maui County
- Illinois: Chicago; Evanston
- Iowa: Marshall County
- Maryland: Chestertown
- Massachusetts: Brookline; Great Barrington; Manchester; Marblehead; Nantucket
- New Mexico: Santa Fe; Silver City
- New York: East Hampton; Hasting on Hudson; Mamaroneck; Rye; Southampton
- North Carolina: Hyde, Currituck and Dare Counties
- Oregon: Corvallis; Eugene; Portland (July 2011)
- Texas: Austin; Freer; Fort Stockton; Kermit; Laguna Vista; Laredo; South Padre Island; Sunset Valley
- Rhode Island: Barrington
- Washington: Bainbridge Island; Bellingham; Edmonds; Issaquah; Mukilteo; Olympia; Port Townsend; Shoreline; Thurston County; Tumwater

A partial list of some of the countries or regions in which individual cities have banned some type of single-use plastic bags.

- Australia
- Argentina
- Bangladesh
- Cameroon
- Chile
- Haiti
- India
- Ireland
- Ivory Coast

- Kenya
- Mali
- Mauritania
- Northern Ireland
- Pakistan
- Philippians
- Tanzania

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- State of California. *Governor Brown Signs Legislation to Ban Single-Use Plastic Bags*. State of California, 2014. Web. 11 Dec. 2014
- Westport, Connecticut, Municipal Code § 46-112.
- http://www.cawrecycles.org/issues/plastic_campaign/plastic_bags/national and <http://www.surfrider.org/pages/plastic-bag-bans-fees>. Each website then hyperlinked an electronic copy of the original ordinance for each town, city, state, and country.